

Sidelights on the New York Theatre

BY FRANKLIN FYLES.

NEW YORK, Dec. 16.—Twenty-three plays have had introductory performances in New York within a week. Many of them were little ones, though, and occasional, but some of these briefs were interesting to those who watch for fresh dramatic ideas. Three were presented at a matinee which made \$10,000 for A. M. Palmer's widow, whom he had left in poverty. From being a competitive producing manager with Lester Wallack's, and Augustus Daly, controlling a stock company as celebrated as either of theirs, Palmer lost prestige and prosperity, developed a fatal malady and died in debt. He had organized that memorable matinee which put \$25,000 into the finally indignant Wallack's purse, but when his own turn came to be the sole in art and by-gone in business, he declined to be helped in that way.

"When I am dead, do what you will for my wife and children," he said to Daniel Frohman, "but I'd rather work out the time that's left me—if I can get a job for a little while."

So Charles Frohman gave the former dramatic factor a chance to earn a living as business agent at one of the Frohman theatres. Pathetic, consider that the third matinee in that triumvirate, Daly, was several times a bankrupt, and only left an estate by changing to die at an up instead of a down point in his changeable fortunes. I wonder if it is possible that either of the Frohmans or the Shuberts, Erlanger or Belasco, Klaw or Piskie, will die moneyless after all their profitable contention.

But these three plays worth mentioning at the Palmer matinee: English authors of account, R. C. Carton and Alfred Sutro, had written dialogues, one light with jovial sentiment and the other heavy with woe and emotion. "The Ninth Waltz" showed the chance meeting, in an ante-room at a ball, of two hearts who had been widely separated for years. They talked as with a tily as Carton can write, and behaved as mannerly as Ray Davis and Cyril Scott can act. But there was nothing in it more ruffing than the woman telling the man that in his absence she had become a wife, whereas he was depressed, and her later information that she was a widow, whereas he was elated.

Sutro's "The Correct Thing" was a study in polite vice. A young Englishman, about to make an advantageous marriage, paid a parting visit to the mistress whom he had to get rid of. The author meant us to pity the woman and despise the man. She had flung through a love that was honest, though unseemly, and she indulged a fond, forlorn hope that she might become the wife of her paramour. The Englishman is as old in fiction as he is in actuality. Sydney Grundy used to cite almost exactly the same way—to cite a recent instance—in "In Honor Bound," a short play which he lengthened into "A Debt of Honor."

Margaret Ansell was the sufferer in "The Correct Thing." Have you seen Margaret act? She is the womanly thing since Clara Morris was young. She could start your tears by telling you that a corn hurt her foot, or set you sobbing with an account of a painful felon on her finger, and when she gets hysterical about anasthese in her heart she breaks you all up. She is astonishingly clever, but she is awfully gifted. She is now playing in "Zira," a new version of "The New Magdalen" differing from the old one in no essential except that the woman is a divorced wife instead of a repentant outcast. The dramatically weakened change was made in the actress' dislike of personating an impure heroine. Why, then, did she volunteer to represent that kind of a creature in "The Correct Thing"? Perhaps she reasoned that the charity of the occasion would cover the sinners and it was for fifteen minutes only in a single afternoon, anyway.

The audience was mostly feminine, too, and all for Margaret against Ben Webster, although he is very beautiful and she is barely pretty. The author hardly ever let him complete a sentence in self-defense, while she silenced him over and over with an eloquence of grievance that overwhelmed him. When Margaret throws herself flat on the floor before him in moaning anguish and he turned away from her, she stole behind the bench and actually admired Ben, as they do melodramatic villains in Bowery theatres. "Isn't he the demon limit?" said one. "And isn't she the angelst ever?" said the other.

Half an hour later those same girls, who seemed to regard the "Ovid's Art of Love" scene from "The Hunchback" as a masterpiece, were cheering the Hassard Short a chump and a duffer because, as the bashful Modus, he didn't kiss Viola Allen, the teasing Helen. They were from Fifth avenue, too.

William Faversham figured that afternoon as an author as well as actor. His service as hero in "The Squared Man" had incited him to write a one-act wild western melodrama, "In Old California," and I will tell you why, although it was a futile effort, it interested me very much for its killing error was a singular one for an experienced actor to fall into. The character created by Faversham for himself was a sheriff in pursuit of a bandit, yet throughout the action, clear up to the denouement, this hero impersonated the villain, in a disguise so thorough that not alone the heroines on the stage, but many in the audience didn't identify him. The bandit was described to us at the outset as wearing long yellow hair so, when a man thus distinguished came into the hero's cabin and asked her to hide him from the sheriff, she fell in love with him instantaneously and put him into a secret closet. A second bleached Buffalo Bill dashed in and begged for concealment. Which was the fugitive villain? This one. The other was the pursuing hero. The sheriff came out and took the bandit captive, but by that time we rather liked Faversham distinguished as a fighting bandit, and we couldn't all in a minute, favor him when he pulled off his yellow wig and revealed himself as the tricky sheriff. An oddly planned play for an actor to write.

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I ought to be sorry that the only full-length new play in Broadway this week (except a French one by Sarah Bernhardt's repertory) is a frivolous farce, and I really am glad it is no worse than that. To the outlying theatres are brought problem dramas and melodramas with titles something like "Why Girls Come to Naughty," "Companions of a Wife," "Queen of the Laundry Whirl" and "No Mother to Spank Her." By the white-light district of our theatrical town has to get along, for the time being, with a bit of nonsense, "Before and After," its theme being pertaining to the difference in its characters before and after taking a nostrum warranted to change the blues to rosy hues. As the programme assures the authorship to Leo Dittichstein, I assume that he doesn't remember getting it from Berlin, where it had been conveyed from Paris by my guess is that the medicine, which in New York is merely a cheer-up from the gym, was in the French and German cities a love philter, a narcotic for the conscience, an extant of devility, in short, a very wicked intoxicant. Dittichstein seems to have done with the material what does do to foul fabrics, cleaned and colored it in to wear to the eyes of people. He has made a good job of it. Not that Mrs. Piskie, in whose husband's theatre it is shown, would care to skin his tag of cavalcade, for it requires a frolic of husbands, wives and others, but its gaiety doesn't deserve any denunciation.

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But in the public performance, "Before and After" looked like a frolic as funny to the actors as to the audience. At one point in the farce a really faithful husband figures unwillingly in an escapade with a soubrette. He is delicious and she is in the dumps, too. This involves puns, double doses of the quick bracer into their champagne. They have sat apart in a morose mood. But the drug takes instant effect. Their frowns give way to smiles, then to grins, then to laughter, and finally they break into a hilarious can-can. Now, I watched Fritz Williams and George Lawrence at the rehearsal practicing that can-can effort, it interested me very much for its killing error was a singular one for an experienced actor to fall into. The character created by Faversham for himself was a sheriff in pursuit of a bandit, yet throughout the action, clear up to the denouement, this hero impersonated the villain, in a disguise so thorough that not alone the heroines on the stage, but many in the audience didn't identify him. The bandit was described to us at the outset as wearing long yellow hair so, when a man thus distinguished came into the hero's cabin and asked her to hide him from the sheriff, she fell in love with him instantaneously and put him into a secret closet. A second bleached Buffalo Bill dashed in and begged for concealment. Which was the fugitive villain? This one. The other was the pursuing hero. The sheriff came out and took the bandit captive, but by that time we rather liked Faversham distinguished as a fighting bandit, and we couldn't all in a minute, favor him when he pulled off his yellow wig and revealed himself as the tricky sheriff. An oddly planned play for an actor to write.

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modern emotionalism, like that of Camille—a character, by the way, which she plays seldom except in America; but has made her famous by admiration of such Sargon heroines of outbreathing violence as Fedora, La Tosca, Theodora, Cleopatra and Giannina. Yet there are critics in New York who recognize the making of Mrs. Carter by David Belasco, yet hold that Sardou's greater work of the same general kind for the greater Bernardt has been a hindrance to her. I think that idea is false.

BOARD OF INSANITY.

Convenes in Regular Monthly Session

With All Members Present.

Provo, Dec. 16.—The state board of insanity met yesterday in regular monthly session, all members being present. The following business was transacted: Appropriations were made in the following amounts:

Salaries \$1,875.00
Improvements and repairs 129.64
New building 645.00
Current expenses 2,235.57

And requisitions were made on the state auditor to cover the amount. Treasurer Farrar reported the following condition of the finances of the institution:

Balance on hand Nov. 1 \$1,021.25
Received from state warrants 1,031.51
Sundry items 50.00

Total \$2,102.76
Disbursed 4,255.31

Balance on hand \$ 86.25
Appropriations for November were made in the following amounts:

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Bids for furnishing supplies for the ensuing six months were accepted from the following firms:

George E. Howe, Excelsior Mercantile company, Chapman's mercantile company and Provo Meat & Packing company, groceries.
Sutro Drug company and Provo Drug company, drugs.
Sutro & Scott, coal.
George A. Clark, straw hats.

The superintendent was authorized to buy meat and butter in the open market. Superintendent Calder was authorized to employ a married couple to run the laundry. This department has previously been run by the attendants assisted by patients, but it is considered a safe to have the patients do this work.

The following table shows the movement of patients for November, 1905:

	Men.	Women.	Total.
Number in institution Oct. 1	188	196	384
Admitted	1	1	2
Under care	191	196	387
Treatment	191	196	387
Discharged	1	1	2
Died	1	1	2
Remaining Nov. 30	187	195	382

Judges McCarty and Strapp of the supreme court, Secretary of State Tracy, Superintendent of Schools Nelson, Ward Arthur Pratt and Judge Willis Brown of the Salt Lake juvenile court, were guests of the board and inspected the hospital. They were most favorably impressed by the condition of the institution. The board and visitors remained for the evening concert, which is given by patients and attendants every Thursday evening.

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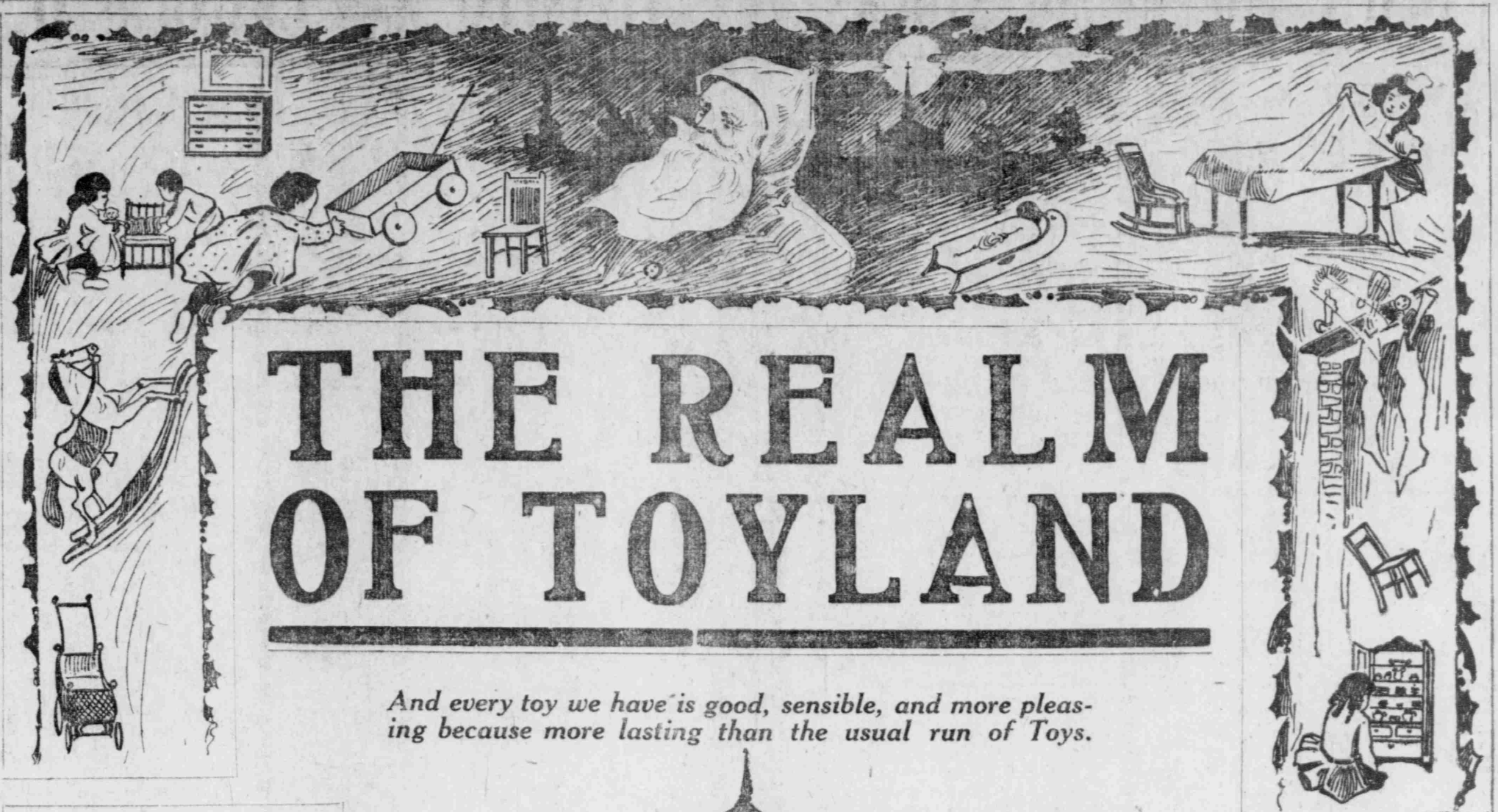
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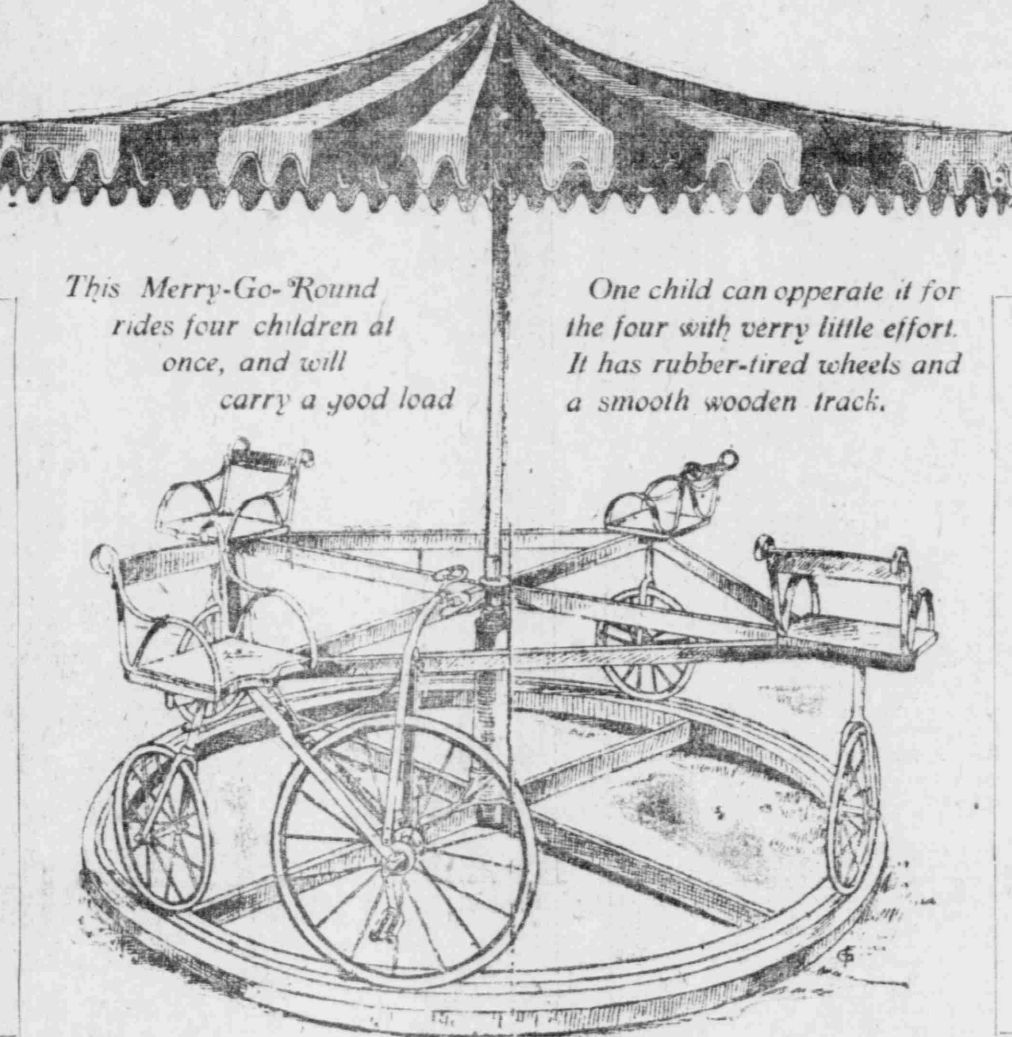
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